

REMARKS

I. INTRODUCTION

Applicants thank the Examiner for the indication that claims 14-18 are allowed, and that claims 9-13 and 21 would be allowed if rewritten in independent form.

Previously-pending claim 9 has been cancelled, without prejudice. Independent claims 1, 19 and 22 and have been amended to include the subject matter recited in now-cancelled claim 9. Claims 11-13 and 21 have been rewritten in independent form to include the recitations of previously-pending independent claims 1 and 19, respectively. Claim 10 has been amended to depend from amended independent claim 1 which has been amended to include the subject matter of previously-pending claim 9. Claims 14 and 20 have been amended to remove minor informalities therefrom. New independent claim 23 has been added to recite the subject matter of now-cancelled claim 9. New independent claims 24, 29 and 32 have been added to recite the subject matter of amended independent claim 21. New independent claims 25, 27 and 30 have been added to recite the subject matter of amended independent claims 11 and 12. New independent claims 26, 28 and 31 have been added to recite the subject matter of amended independent claim 13. New independent claim 33 has been added to recite the subject matter of allowed claim 14. Accordingly, claims 1-8 and 10-32 are under consideration in the above-referenced application. Provided above, please find a claim listing indicating the current amendments to the previously-pending claims 1, 10-14 and 19-22, cancellation of previously-pending claim 8, and addition of new claims 23-32 on separate sheets so as to comply with the

requirements set forth in 37 C.F.R. § 1.121. It is respectfully submitted that no new matter has been added.

II. REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) SHOULD BE WITHDRAWN

Claims 1-8, 19, 20 and 22 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over Applicants' allegedly admitted prior art, in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,421,331 issued to Devito et al. (the "Devito Patent").

As the Examiner shall ascertain, each of independent claims 1, 19 and 22 have been amended to include the subject matter recited in now-cancelled claim 9. Applicants respectfully note that Examiner acknowledged that the subject matter of previously-pending (and now-cancelled) claim 9 was allowable. (See Office Action, p. 6, para. 4). Accordingly, the 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) rejection indicated above is now moot, and should therefore be withdrawn.

Applicants further reserve the right to prosecute the subject matter as recited in the claims prior to the claims amendments indicated above, as well as any further subject matter described in the above-identified application, in one or more continuing applications which would claim priority from the present application.

III. ALLOWABLE SUBJECT MATTER

Applicants gratefully acknowledge the Examiner's indication that claims 14-18 are allowed and that claim 9-13 would be allowed if rewritten in independent form.

As indicated herein, previously-pending claim 9 has been cancelled above without prejudice, and each of independent claims 1, 19 and 22 have been amended to include the subject matter recited in now-cancelled claim 9. Claims 11-13 and 21 have been rewritten in independent form to include the recitations of previously-pending independent claims 1 and 19, respectively. Claim 10 has been amended to depend from amended independent claim 1 which has been amended to include the subject matter of previously-pending claim 9. Claims 14 and 20 have been amended to remove minor informalities therefrom. New independent claim 23 has been added to recite the subject matter of now-cancelled claim 9. New independent claims 24, 29 and 32 have been added to recite the subject matter of amended independent claim 21. New independent claims 25, 27 and 30 have been added to recite the subject matter of amended independent claims 11 and 12. New independent claims 26, 28 and 31 have been added to recite the subject matter of amended independent claim 13. New independent claim 33 has been added to recite the subject matter of allowed claim 14.

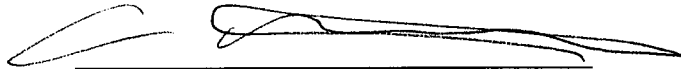
Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request the Examiner to confirm that claims 1-8 and 10-33 are allowed in the next communication.

IV. CONCLUSION

In light of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that all pending claims 1-8 and 10-33 are in condition for allowance. Prompt consideration, reconsideration and allowance of the present application are therefore earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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Gary Abelev
Patent Office Reg. No. 40,479

DORSEY & WHITNEY, L.L.P.
250 Park Avenue
New York, New York 10177

Attorney(s) for Applicant(s)
(212) 415-9371

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